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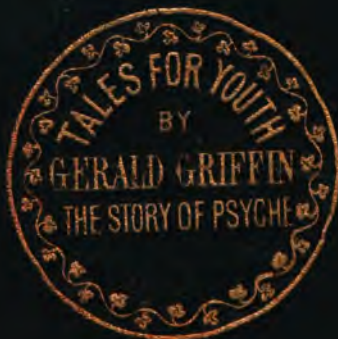
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# A STORY OF PSYCHE.

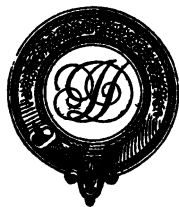


A

# STORY OF PSYCHE.

BY GERALD GRIFFIN,

AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGIANS," "THE CHRISTIAN  
PHYSIOLOGIST," ETC., ETC.



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# A STORY OF PSYCHE.

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AFTER the gate of Eden was closed upon the exiled parents of mankind, the maiden Psyche,\* still drooping with penitence for her fault, still bathed in tears of filial sorrow, and pining for some means of effecting a reconciliation with her offended benefactor, passed into a valley of the east, inferior indeed in loveliness to the Paradise which she had forfeited, but still lovely and blooming beyond all that our cold imagination can conceive of that Paradise itself.

The sorrowing maiden was astonished at the change which she felt in her nature. Passions, which, during her days of innocence and favour, remained almost concealed from her own know-

\* The Soul.

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ledge within her bosom, or only awoke in gentle impulses to give a zest and force to her enjoyments, now startled her by the strange and unruly violence with which they rebelled against her government. It seemed as if they participated in that spirit which estranged from her dominion the creatures of the air and forest, from the moment she lost the favour of her Maker. The creation around, which in her earlier years had presented only objects calculated to afford her innocent delight, now wore an altered look. Sin and temptation seemed to mingle with all its beauties; and she trembled as she ventured on the paths of the yet untrodden valley, with a strange feeling of care and insecurity.

The Almighty, by whom she was led into that delightful region, informed her that nothing of all she now beheld could afford a lasting happiness to her spirit. From him she had proceeded, as the stream from the mountain top, and like that stream she could never know repose until she had reached the level of her origin, the bosom of that kind being from whom she derived her life. In order to prevent her fixing her affections on any of those beautiful objects which she beheld around her, and so forgetting her real

destiny, the Almighty had made all things changeable within her view. Spring faded into summer; summer into autumn; autumn into winter; day into night. The flowers, as soon as she plucked and pressed them to her bosom, faded and died; nothing was permanent, nothing fixed or lasting; the waters flowed, the winds passed on, the stars rose and set; all things seemed created for her enjoyment, and yet none were half so long-lived as the affections of the maiden. The Almighty, who knew the secret principle of her nature, which tended, with an invisible longing, towards himself, beheld and pitied the efforts which she made to find a substitute in her exile, on which the desires of her heart might dwell with satisfaction.

He told her that there was one way, and only one, by which she might attain the perfect happiness for which she pined, and pointed to a mount on which the beams of the evening sun fell, far in the distance. There, he said, she would learn the course of which he spoke.

To aid her in her journey thither many councillors and friends were given her; for Psyche, in her earthly condition, was a feeble creature, incapable of forming any design, and only pos-

sessing a free will to choose between the good and evil proposals which were made by her own ministers.

The duties of her attendants were various. The five Senses were appointed to give her intelligence of all that passed in the creation around her. Taste warned her against the use of those fruits which might be pernicious to her health, and directed her to the choice of others, from which she received a delicate gratification, and an unfailing store of strength and vigour. Smell conducted her to those pleasant vales which were filled with the purest airs, and most ambrosial fragrance ; and cautioned her to avoid the unwholesome vapours that were engendered in the marshes and on the shores of the standing lake. Hearing supplied her with intelligence of all the sounds that creation sent forth, from the light whisper of the wind that shook her bower and disturbed her morning slumbers, to the awful pealing of the thunder-cloud, which was heard from the one heaven to the other ; and which Psyche attended with a deep reverence, and since her banishment with fear. To Sight was assigned the duty of presenting, for the admiration and instruction of the maiden, all the beau-

tiful shapes and hues which were comprised in the young creation ; while Feeling remained close to the side of his mistress, and though more limited in the extent of his occupations than the two last mentioned, yet, by the accuracy and fidelity of his intelligence, not only added to her information, but was frequently employed in correcting the errors and misrepresentations of those Senses.

The ideas, however, which they communicated to her were as fugitive and short-lived as they were lively and exciting. To enable her to retain them for the uses of her journey through the world, the matron, Memory, was directed to attend her steps, and to treasure up all the intelligence which Psyche desired should not be lost. Memory was, however, not very judicious in her choice, and wholly incapable of applying the hoarded information which she possessed, to any advantage. She was, moreover, compliant and parasitical in her disposition ; and in making her selections from the quantities of information communicated to her by the Senses, she was always careful to observe and to be guided by the mood of Psyche at the moment. The consequence was, that her storehouse was often

cumbered with such a stock of useless material, that it might as well have been left empty. And even when furnished with ideas of a higher class, the little skill evinced in their arrangement scarcely rendered them of any real benefit to her mistress.

Her deficiencies in this respect were compensated by the abilities of her two children, Judgment and Imagination. While the talents of those highly gifted ministers excited the admiration of the universe, their counsels enabled Psyche again to exercise a sovereign authority over all creatures ; and made the feeble maiden the terror, at once, and the wonder of the world in which she dwelt.

Born of the same parent, and equally excellent in those natural qualities for which they were esteemed, the characters of the two were yet widely different. Imagination, the elder born, was a wild and wayward nymph, as imprudent in her conduct, and incautious in her suggestions, as she was brilliant in wit and boundless in invention. It was at the same time her duty and delight to represent, under a multitude of new combinations, the ideas which the Senses presented, and which her parent preserved ; to draw

inferences from, and found conjectures upon these, sometimes of the most wild and whimsical, and sometimes of the most sublime and admirable nature. Judgment, on the other hand, was dull at forming schemes of conduct, and incapable of doing more than rejecting or recommending the various speculations which were submitted by his sister for the adoption of Psyche ; but in this his sagacity was so unerring, that, of the two, his assistance was the more essential to the welfare and happiness of their mistress. Her heart, indeed, leaned toward the former, whose dazzling, though illusive, talents had more of attraction in them than the cold severity which distinguished the counsels of Judgment ; and it was not without pain that she saw herself obliged to dismiss, as vain and idle, a thousand beautiful and finely wrought schemes, which Imagination proposed, and which Judgment condemned. The former dreaded the rigour of her brother ; and it was only in those moments when he slumbered, or was absent, that she ventured to entertain Psyche with her seductive and alluring projects of enjoyment. In thus shunning his society, however, she acted against her own interests, for it was remarked, that her genius never shone



more brightly than when it was chastened by the restraint which his presence imposed upon her. Far from imitating his sister, Judgment, who was conscious of his own defects, and felt the necessity of her assistance, took every opportunity of courting her friendship, and acquiring her esteem.

The first grey shimmering of a summer day dawn had whitened the edges of the clouds that overhung the bower of Psyche; the first breeze had cleared and curled the surface of the lake; the earliest bird had sounded his small trumpet in the skies; the first ambrosial sigh was breathed from the bosom of the opening rose, when Psyche, summoning her ministers around her, complained of her present unsatisfied condition, and called on them to devise some means of filling up that void which she felt in her affections.

A long and boisterous debate ensued. The Senses, who were heard first, all assured her, that on their own indulgence depended that felicity for which she longed. Sight pointed to the rising sun and to the gorgeous landscape which was now fully revealed in the splendour of his golden light, and bade her never look for happiness if scenes like that could not bestow it;

but even while he spoke, a cloud obscured the prospect, and Judgment whispered, with a smile, that although pleasures like these might serve to increase her gratitude, they were far too transient to satisfy her thirst for, and her capability of, enjoyment. Hearing directed her attention to the melody of the morning bird, but he too ceased his song, and silence confounded the promiser. Feeling advised her to keep close to her bower, to choose the softest roses for her pillow, and to avoid the pains of exertion and the extremes of heat and cold. Smell offered his sweetest odours; and Taste, a bloated and voluptuous sense, advised her to seek in gluttony the happiness to which she was destined. But Psyche, though she acknowledged, with gratitude, the services of each, was yet constrained to admit that, whether singly or united, they were wholly unable to confer upon her all the felicity which she felt herself capable of enjoying. "You," said she to Feeling, "who counsel me to be content with consulting my ease; you, likewise, who would have me feed for ever on scented airs; and you, who think that I could be content with perpetual gorging, are all alike mistaken. My constitution and my destiny are not like those of your

disciples, the sloth, theameleon, and the cormorant; I feel within me a mysterious longing which cannot be gratified by aught that earth has yet presented to my view, and I am satisfied that the Almighty has not implanted that desire within my heart without a motive."

Here she looked towards Judgment, who merely afforded her a calm assent. But Psyche, languishing for some more inventive counsellor, waved her hand to Imagination, who had been awaiting with impatience the summons of her mistress, and the termination of her preceding disquisition.

The bright-eyed enthusiast sprung from her seat of roses at the signal, and shook, as she hurried through the group, her airy robes, which were dyed with colours more bright than those which glitter on the scales of an expiring dolphin.

She fascinated the ears of all the circle with the splendour and richness of her promises. None of those who had yet spoken, she said, were in error in supposing their own services necessary to the happiness of Psyche. Their only mistake was in believing that it was by the indulgence of one or more in preference, and not of all

together, that felicity could be obtained. The Senses, she said, should, undoubtedly, be made the chief instruments of her pleasure, but then it was not by exercising them on any of those objects which she now beheld around them, that Psyche could hope to receive all that exquisite gratification which they were capable of affording. She would lead them into scenes of light and of abundance, where Sight might gaze for ever on objects of such surpassing loveliness, that he would feel no longer the thirst for novelty with which he was here tormented ; where Hearing would be rapt into perpetual ecstasies by airy melodies and sounds which yet had never mingled with his dreams ; where Smell might inhale a continual succession of odours, each one of which would fill him with happiness even to fainting ; where banquets of an unknown piquancy and sweetness would for ever stimulate, and yet for ever gratify the voluptuous appetite of Taste ; and where Feeling might repose for ever on couches more soft than cygnet's down, with the freshest and gentlest of the ocean winds to cool his pillow, and allay the burning of his blood in summer noons.

Judgment, too, she said, should not be for-

gotten in this new world, to which she would conduct them. The wonders of science should be disclosed to him. He should penetrate by her assistance into the centre of things, and ascend beyond the stars themselves. By her aid he should withdraw the curtain which Nature had thrown over the noblest of her works, and look with a steady eye into the secrets of the divine wisdom. All the distinctions of life, intellect, and organization, from the solid and senseless marble up to the gifted and intellectual lord of the creation himself, should be made plain and palpable to his understanding.

It was therefore folly, she said, to suppose that because Psyche beheld not around her the present means of happiness, she could not hope to find them in the vast and varied kingdoms which the world presented for her investigation. "If you find not happiness in this valley," she continued, "wander to the next ; and if it be not there, you will yet find countless regions to explore beyond the blue and azure hills that bank in the landscapes all around you. Nay, though you should have exhausted all the regions of this earth, and find your search still fruitless, I will weave you wings to try a flight beyond them.

Science shall enable you to descend in safety into the bosom of the caverned deep, which I have often painted to you, radiant with hidden splendours, beautiful with gorgeous palaces, and blooming with everlasting verdure. If happiness abide not there, I will teach you to burrow like the coney into the dark and gloomy earth on which we tread, and deep beneath whose surface the diamond, the light of the mine, lies buried. What new delights, what gorgeous spectacles must heaven have treasured within that world, the very surface of which seems so replete with joy and beauty! How rich must be the interior of that mighty palace, the outside of which has been embellished with so much grace and majesty! Yet if the abode of happiness should not be found within, I will teach you to ascend the car of science, and search out her track amongst the stars. Look up into the space above you! From world to world of all those luminous spheres which you now behold, fading and sinking in the west, we will yet learn to travel by the help of wings, which, from the native and unaided force of mine own invention, I shall devise; and our way from planet to planet shall in after times become as plain and easy as the path

between this bower and yonder fountain. And who shall say that happiness may not be found amid that infinitude of novelties and wonders which the universe shall offer to our view!"

A general murmur of applause succeeded the words of the speaker, and it was not without difficulty that Judgment could obtain a hearing in his turn. Psyche, with a half-consenting smile, had extended her hand to the enchanting orator, when she was arrested by the voice of her more rigid counsellor.

He began, with his accustomed skill and wisdom, by shaking the faith of Psyche in the veracity of her favourite. "Why should you be deceived by her?" said he: "remember you not, Psyche, a few mornings since, when you sat by the fountain, and suddenly heard a thunder-cloud burst above your head? How Imagination magnified the danger! What falsehoods she told you of the ruin which must follow the rending of the dark womb of the lightnings! She affirmed that death was inevitable—that no possibility of escape remained; and, not contented with thus exciting your fears to a most unreasonable degree, she proceeded with a wanton cruelty to paint the horrors of that death

which menaced you, with an exaggerating pencil. On the contrary, what was the counsel that I gave you? I bade you to observe that in the space over which the cloud scattered his lightnings there were millions of objects, no more than one of which, it was probable, would be struck by a single flash, and how improbable it was, arguing even from the usual chances of nature, that you should be that one. Why should you tremble, I said, at being placed in a situation where only one chance in a million was against you? And even admitting that the danger was more evident, I bade you reflect that your life was never meant by Him who gave it to be left to the uncertain mercy of the elements; that the same Providence ruled over the storm and the calm, and that he could as easily strike you senseless on your couch of summer roses, as in the midst of the convulsions that were then agitating the frame of nature. It was but that morning you had found a scorpion on your pillow, and you knew not, I said, a tenth of the instances in which a similar Providence had preserved you from an unseen danger. You remember how instantly you laid aside those terrors, and declared that you would never again



listen to the suggestions of Imagination when danger assailed your person. I now tell you that her promises of pleasure are as false and delusive as were her bodements of fear. I caution you to avoid her suggestions when she comes, as now, arrayed in smiles and splendour, no less carefully than when, confused and agitated by vain alarms, she rushes upon you, and darkens your understanding with a causeless gloom. She talks of conducting you to happiness through the gate of knowledge! She!—Behold that worm that crawls at your feet! Let her, before she carries you to other spheres, explain a little that is enigmatical in this. Let her declare the hidden principle of action which enables that small creature to perform its little journey along the sod. There is a subject for her skill, perfectly within her observation, wholly unconnected with other known causes and existences; let her exercise there her analytical genius, and declare the result of her conjectures.”

He paused; while they all turned their attention to his opponent. She looked somewhat confused and hesitating, but felt it impossible to decline the task which had been proposed to her. Numberless were the efforts which she

had made to explain the phenomenon. She spoke of accidental motion ; but they all declared their inability to find anything more in this than a form of words ; for accidental motion, in matter, without an impelling cause, was, to their notions, impossible. She then spoke of electricity ; but they shook their heads. They asked what this fluid was, and she could not tell them. She spoke of gravitation, and they seemed to have caught a light, but discovered soon after that she had led them from one dilemma to another ; for this, at most, was but a step toward the cause, and still far from the original cause itself. It was but giving them a law where they wanted a legislator—a law, too, which, many said, was falsified by those maniacs of the celestial system, the comets. She was asked to point out the self-existing power from which those effects proceeded, and she replied that she would think upon the matter. It was possible, she said, they should find it out as they went along.

“Behold,” said Judgment, “the faint and shadowy resemblances of the truth which shall occupy the leisure and swell the vanity of men for thousands of ages yet unnumbered ! Will you remember, Psyche, that your existence has a

- date, beyond which it cannot be prolonged ; and even supposing (what is not to be supposed) that Imagination might accomplish a thousandth part of that to which she has pledged herself, and that you might yet be following the track of Happiness among the stars, consider that death must find you long before your search shall be half accomplished, and your lot will be to sleep in ignorance and wake in fire. Be guided by my words, and cling to the merciful promise of your Creator, as your only certain hope. Believe me when I say, that even if that Almighty Being were to create a universe still fairer and more exquisite than any which Imagination can picture to your view, you would be as far from perfect happiness as you are at present ; nor can you hope to enjoy it, until you are restored to the presence and the favour of Him, from whom your spirit was derived. This you may do by pleasing Him ; and you can please Him by doing His will, without either burrowing to the centre, diving into the depths of the ocean, or ascending to the spheres. Observe the simple rules which he has proposed for your government ; confine Imagination and the Senses to the uses for which they were given you ; suffer them not, from servants to elevate

themselves into the dignity of rulers. Let Virtue first, and Knowledge after, be your line of conduct. Cling with a trusting affection to the promises of your Maker, and you are safe ; forsake them, and you perish. Until you have learned all, be as if you had learned nothing—simple, humble, faithful, and obedient.”

This speech occasioned a general and vehement expression of discontent. Psyche, however, who felt the truth of his arguments, made a feeble effort to regain her place by his side, but the Senses, who had crept between them, forced her to a distance. Imagination, watching her moment, flung a golden net around the maiden, and spreading her wings, soared upward into the region of the winds, while Judgment stood, forlorn and neglected, by the forsaken bower.

Forgetful of her high descent, forgetful of her glorious hopes, and wholly governed by the counsels of her changeful ministers, Psyche now wandered long over the kingdoms of the earth, deluded by the vain promises of her guide, and sick and weary of the quicksilver chase into which she had been cheated. Imagination fulfilled indeed a portion of her promises ; by the aid of her daughter, Science, she taught the

piercing inquirer to burrow a few feet into the earth, to explore the shallows of the ocean, and even to venture a few hours' journey into the clouds. But every experiment only taught Psyche to attach a greater weight than ever to the words of her forsaken counsellor, and to render her more heart-sick of her idle toil.

The Senses, too, deceived her. Their own power of enjoyment was exhausted long before the supplies which Nature offered for their gratification could be appropriated, and all their efforts instead of procuring happiness, ended in satiety and repletion.

As they passed over the kingdoms, they scattered the seeds of evil and of good on all with an indiscriminating hand. Causeless wars, ambitions, jealousies, unreal injuries, suspected enmities, unjust judgments, superstitions, and infidelities, sprung up beneath them into a rank and teeming harvest. Psyche beheld the evil she had occasioned, and remorse began to trouble her quiet. She saw that by the abuse of her own free will, she had changed into evil the good of the creation, and reversed the designs of the beneficent Founder of the universe. He had placed in her hands the power of good, and the

power of evil, and had urged her by counsels and by menaces to the use of the former, and the avoidance of the latter, and she had wantonly made her election contrary. Oppressed by the pangs of self-reproach, and by the gloomy fears that began to settle on her spirit, she turned for consolation to her over-indulged favourite ; but the ingrate, Imagination, far from soothing her terrors, now used all her efforts to magnify the horror of that retributive judgment which she dreaded. She represented to her in the most lively manner, the anger of her Maker, the magnitude of his power, the strictness of his justice, the eternal agony of that separation from Him which was doomed to be made the chief occasion of her punishment. She bade Psyche think upon the hour of her death, and summoned up to her contemplation the terrific circumstances of that fearful change—the vain regrets, the altered opinions, the frightful forebodings, the rejected and useless prayers, the convulsive struggles, the shiverings, the livid paleness, the clasped and damp and trembling hands, the death-rattle, and the final darkness. She even hurried her on to scenes beyond the grave. She caused the trumpet of the angel of doom to sound in her ears, and

terrified her with a vision of the judgment-seat, and with the words of her condemnation. The irrevokable sentence was pronounced over her, and Imagination now hurried her downward to the scene of her eternal torment. Howlings and blasphemy, weeping and gnashing of teeth, sounded in her hearing. Darkness and suffocating flames, rivers of fire rolling their unconsuming billows over millions of guilty souls who were sentenced to a punishment as infinite as the consequences of their guilt, and as eternal as that guilt would have been, had the Divine Justice permitted them to perpetuate their existence on earth ; these, and other horrors, too dreadful for description, were exhibited to her affrighted gaze ; and Imagination, to complete the torture of her victim, represented to her the semblance of her own figure, suspended over the abyss of fire by a single hair of her head. But at this sight the maiden broke with a shriek from the arms of her tormentor, and refused to listen to her voice again. Thus is it that Imagination first seduces the soul to crime, and then becomes herself the forestaller of justice.

While she deplored the absence of her lost adviser, Psyche beheld, with a sudden rapture of

delight, a figure resembling his, seated near the mouth of a grotto close to her side. The walls of the apartment were covered with various scientific devices, and the floor was covered with instruments of art, and heavy volumes heaped one over the other—some lying open, and marked with many marginal comments. Psyche approached, and became still more convinced that she had recovered her ancient friend. The similitude in costume and demeanour was exact, but to the eyes of the maiden his features seemed to have undergone a considerable change. His lip was curled with an expression of pride and self-sufficiency, which was very unlike that gentle and submissive modesty by which the unbending firmness of his look and bearing was formerly qualified. He did not appear to be conscious of her presence, but was rapt in an earnest and strenuous endeavour to look into the heart of a limestone rock. Psyche was surprised to see her wise old counsellor employed in so hopeless an undertaking.

Fearful, however, of committing some error, the maiden addressed him as a stranger, and naming the hill to which she desired to direct her long wandering steps, requested to be informed



by what means she might recover her path. He asked her in the first place the motive of her journey, and being informed that she hoped to find there the means of attaining perfect happiness, he raised his head with an appearance of some interest.

"If you choose," said he, "to observe the vulgar road which is trodden by the rabble of the earth, you will find it at a little distance on the right ; but if you wish to avoid the contact of those mean spirits, I will invent a machine by which we will travel thither together, at a rate surpassing that of the winds themselves."

Psyche said her only desire was to reach that spot by whatever means he could devise. She had been long tormented, she confessed, by her vain efforts to obtain felicity, and had satisfied herself that it was not to be found by her unassisted exertions.

"Your exertions," replied the stranger, "were misapplied. Happiness lies not in the east nor in the west. It consists in being contented with the state of circumstances around you. Always compare your lot with what it might be if rendered worse, and you will find a consolation. If you lose fortune, fame, and friends, content yourself

with the enjoyment of health and vigour ; if healthful, be satisfied with the bliss of gazing on the fair light that is shining down upon you, and listening to the sounds which creation utters ; if your senses fail, consider there is yet a perpetual enjoyment in the very act of inhaling the fresh and wholesome air ; and when that too is gone, there are rest and quiet in the tomb."

"For the weary frame there is," said Psyche, "but for the weary soul ! Who can tell what toils and pains are yet reserved for her ? You speak of consolation, but that is not happiness. I complain to you of a certain boundless and insatiable longing which I feel within my nature, and which the whole circle of space itself cannot contain or satisfy ; and you, instead of pointing out to me a reservoir into which I might pour out the overflowing passion, advise me to find relief in making its boundaries still more strict and more oppressive. I ask you how I shall direct my flight, in order to hie away and be at rest, and you bid me cut off my wings. Have *you* found such a course successful ?"

The stranger changed countenance, and returned to his employment of looking through the limestone.

"But how astonished am I," Psyche continued, "to see you, my prudent counsellor, employed in so vain a labour as that! It is wilder than any freak that was ever suggested, even by Imagination herself."

"You should not say so," replied the stranger, continuing his work; "there is no telling what science may achieve. I am inventing glasses which will enable me to penetrate the darkest substances. I cannot err; for I proceed not upon mere theory, but experiment."

"And have you discovered much, as yet?" inquired the maiden.

"Not much. I have yet only learned to know that I know nothing.\* I feel like a child that gathers shells by the ocean of truth.† I had rather discover the cause of a single phenomenon of nature than to receive the diadem of Persia."‡

"Why do you then waste your time in such inquiries, since you have yet learned nothing?"

"There is no telling what science may yet achieve."

"Do you know anything whatever of the origin of things?"

\* Socrates.

† Newton.

‡ Democritus.

"Nothing, as yet ; but there is no saying what science may accomplish."

"As far as I can see, it has enough of work upon its hands as yet. But I am surprised to hear these sentiments from your lips, whose favourite maxim was, that knowledge, all excellent and noble as it is, should follow, not precede virtue."

"Me!" exclaimed the stranger, "when did I make so barbarous an apophthegm as that?"

"Why, are you not my ancient monitor, Judgment?"

"I never saw you before, to my recollection," replied the stranger, looking on her in surprise. "My name is Philosophy."

He again returned to his limestone, and Psyche, disappointed and heart-weary, departed from the grotto.

She made many efforts to regain the pathway, but was doomed to find herself perpetually in error. The Almighty, however, who never intended that she should be altogether lost, and beheld her with pity and affection, amid all her wanderings and ingratitude, resolved to work a miracle in order to restore her to her abandoned virtue. He bade the Spirit of Prophecy visit her

in the desert, and guide her, by the light of visions cast from the future upon her track, to the rest on which she longed to enter. The sun, which was yet to fling its brightness over the nations from that mount to which her eye had been directed in the beginning, darted his beams long before he rose, into the gloom that cumbered the world, and sent his light before him upon the lips of Prophecy. By the aid of that rapt and glorious spirit, Psyche was enabled to recover the path which she had relinquished, and to arrive at that mysterious mountain, which she had been taught to consider as the harbour of her peace, the oracle which was to furnish a solution of all her difficulties. Here she found her abandoned Judgment seated at the foot of a dark cross, stained with blood. He placed in her hands a BOOK, which contained the mystery of her redemption, and which was dictated by the Almighty himself for the instruction of the sons of men.

The events recorded in that great volume are far too sacred and too awful to be discussed in a tale like this, but the lesson which Psyche derived from its perusal was ever after visible in her conduct.

She now observes a penitent and altered course,

barefoot and drooping beneath the weight of that cross, which she found at the mount, she walks along a narrow and a thorny path, the end of which is still hidden from her view. She no longer turns aside, to dally with objects which have but a perishable existence ; nor opens her heart to affections which are liable to be suddenly blasted, or to survive their objects. Her former ministers are now strictly confined to their allotted duties. The Senses, rebellious indeed, but chained down to her commands, are compelled to bear the cross with her. Imagination, instructed and guided by the virgins, Faith, and Hope, and Charity, who were also at the mountain added to her train, instead of terrifying her with causeless fears, or seducing her with unfounded hopes, now cheers her in her toils and pains, by the most delightful representations of that reward for which she labours, the favour of her all amiable Benefactor ; or confines her to the path when her eye happens to stray, by suggesting that loss of favour, which must inevitably follow her wanderings. Even amidst the sorrows and sufferings of the narrow way, through which she follows her recovered hopes, while Faith strengthens, and Judgment confirms her steps, Psyche has often been heard


to say, that her life is happier than when, abandoned to the dominion of her own servants, she trod the fertile valleys of the world, inhaling its sweetest perfumes, and banquetting upon its richest fruits. And there have been bright moments in Psyche's life, when her only stimulus to exertion was the pure love which burned in her heart towards that Creator who made, and who redeemed her; and that, not merely for the good he had done to her, but for his own sake, as the author and origin of all good. There have been moments in her pilgrimage, when her only motive to repentance has been the simple sorrow of a fond heart, reproaching itself for having failed in love. But it is seldom that this pure feeling is unmingled in her fallen nature; and when it comes it is a gift of heaven, the fruit of much exertion, much voluntary privation of pleasure, much self-denial, even of innocent enjoyments, much meditation and ARDENT PRAYER.



# THE FORCE OF CONSCIENCE.

A TALE.

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ITHIN the last year the annals of our neighbourhood have furnished us with a singular instance of the force of that moral instinct which is so mysteriously interwoven by Providence with the inmost faculties of our nature, and whose internal monitions, habitual depravity itself has scarce the power wholly to subdue.

A man named Hogan dwelt, about twenty years ago, in a small cottage on the by-way leading from the village to the common road. The little dwelling has been lately razed to the ground by order of the humane proprietor of the soil, in order that no vestige might remain of



what was once the scene of a history so appalling ; but long will it be ere the villagers, as they pass the fearful spot, shall cease to point out its site amongst the trees, and shudder at the recollections it recalls. It was the birth-place, as well as the inheritance, of the individual already named. He was the child of parents situated comfortably, considering their rank in life, and received an education somewhat superior to that which usually falls to the lot of a peasant's child. Well skilled in such rudiments of knowledge as were taught in the neighbouring village school, instructed in his moral and religious obligations, and even for a time apparently exact in their fulfilment, he was looked upon in his boyhood as an ornament to the simple neighbourhood, and mothers and instructors used his name when they would stimulate their pupils to good conduct. Romance and poetry, in their happiest hours of invention, have never presented to the mind a sweeter subject of contemplation than the memory of a well-spent childhood, and the humble can feel it as well as the most cultivated. The subject of our narrative was not studious merely from the want of social sympathy, nor gentle merely from deficiency of natural spirit.

He danced seldom, but none danced better. He talked little, but none more to the purpose. He did not often mix with company, but when he did he was the life and joy of the little society in which he moved.

It is not all at once that the human mind can pass from a life so blameless and so tranquil as we have described to actions like that which has made the name of the unfortunate Hogan a sound of warning in our neighbourhood. The death of his parents, and in particular of his mother, a decent, pious woman, was the first apparent occasion of the change, which was afterwards observed in the manners of their son. He was oftener seen at fairs and markets than his business made it necessary, and he did not now return as he was wont after noon, when the business of an Irish fair is over, and its pleasures and its pains begin. The spendthrift, who finds poverty and woe amid the splendour and abundance of a capital, might see in the fate of this humble cottager an exact reflection of the history of his own fortunes. At first, it was but sociability and kindness that led him to loiter in the fair, and spend a trifle in compliment to the neighbour with whom he had bought or sold.

By degrees, the tent, the dance, and even at length the fight (the fatal glory of an Irish peasant), began to have their charms, and what was at first amusement became, in a short time, passion. The change of character did not even terminate here. As poverty came on apace, a tinge of mingled gloom and recklessness of mind (alarming symptom of internal ruin) began to mingle with his wild and hair-brained gaiety. The more moderate began to shun his company, and the unhappy wretch grew desperate. He drank, gamed, swore, delivered himself up to all the bestial excess of vulgar dissipation, and became at length the scoff and pity of the adjoining village.

Even here the unhappy Hogan did not arrest his downward progress into ill. Seldom before was our lonely neighbourhood defiled by such instances of depravity as ere long became habitual with him and his accomplices. The decent cottagers and farmers in the vicinity began to complain of pilfered turf ricks and potato pits, of broken paddocks and sheep-walks invaded in the night, and even of cows and horses stolen, without the possibility of their discovering by whom the mischief was effected. The deed, however,

by which the evil progress of this miserable being was brought to a consummation, was of a nature far more heinous.

Near a grove of fir, at a little distance from the village, stood a lonesome house where dwelt an aged lady, supposed to be wealthy, and confiding so far in the peaceable and honest character of the neighbourhood that she did not even keep a male domestic for the security of her house. She was kind and charitable, attentive to the poor and sick, and exceedingly beloved by all around her. There was, in particular, one old beggar-man, whom, though surly and abusive in his demeanour, she had for many years supplied with victuals, which he sat and ate upon the steps of her hall door. It was her unfailing practice, when her daily meals were ended, to fill a plate for her sturdy pensioner, and take it to him with her own hands as he basked in the evening sunshine at her porch, or sought refuge from the winter cold by her kitchen fire. Often had Hogan, in his earlier days, remarked the figure of the aged mendicant sitting on the steps; beheld the green hall door open, the venerable lady appear, discharge her charitable office, exchange a laugh or jest with rough old Yamon,

and leave him to enjoy the surplus of her abundance. Often, as he passed the little lawn where he witnessed the quiet scene, did he admire Mrs. Maunsell's charity, and would fancy he saw her guardian angel smiling on the act.

One evening Yamon was unusually surly and, indeed, insolent to his benefactress. He called her abusive names, and found fault with his dinner, which he flung contemptuously to his dog. Pitying the poor creature's infirmity, yet not disposed to encourage his insolence, Mrs. Maunsell told him, for his pains, he might go without a dinner on the following day. Custom, it is said, creates a right, as it can create a law. The beggar defied and dared her to keep her word. Finding, however, on the following day that she could be resolute as she was kindly, he went away, uttering a thousand threats, shaking his long staff, and vowing vengeance as deep as ever his gratitude had been before. Some persons who were present reproved him for his insolent passion, and did not fail to keep his menace in mind.

It happened that, for some weeks before, the memory of the old lady at the fir grove had occurred to the mind of Hogan, with emotions widely different from those with which he had

once regarded her at his return from labour or from school. The ruffians who were now almost his sole associates, had yet much difficulty in inciting him to join them in an attempt upon the house, on the very night on which the aged beggar-man was refused a dinner. Stimulated by want, and by the threats and taunts of those hardened wretches, he consented to accompany the gang, but on the understanding that no violence should be offered to any individual. They proceeded, after dusk, to accomplish their detestable mission. The unhappy Hogan never until now had even an idea of the anxiety of mind which attends the commission of heinous crime. He feared the hardened character of his associates, and not without cause.

It was already midnight when they entered the grove of firs that screened the dwelling from the westerly blast. So far was its mild proprietress from apprehending anything like danger, that she had given permission to her maid, the only servant in the house, to spend the night at a neighbouring wake. Having fastened the doors and windows, she retired to her sleeping chamber, performed with a tranquil mind her customary devotions, and having extinguished the light, lay

down to rest. She was awoke from a quiet sleep by the stealthy sounds of feet upon the landing-place outside her chamber door. Without losing an instant she advanced to the stair head and demanded who was there? The ruffians rushed upon her, but possessing both strength of mind and bodily energy, she resisted with her utmost force, while she endeavoured with the loudest shrieks to alarm the inmates of the distant cottages. Perplexed and irritated, the inhuman monsters disregarded the compact they had made at setting out, and the unhappy lady fell a victim to their atrocious passions and her own resolution.

But who can describe the condition of the wretched Hogan's mind when he learned (for he had been left without as a kind of sentinel) that the enormities of the night, already sufficiently hideous, had been sealed by murder? Stunned by the news, it appeared to him for the instant as if till now he had led an innocent life, and this was his first step in actual crime. A burning weight seemed to be laid upon his brain, his sight grew dizzy, and he suffered himself to be hurried along by his companions, without the power of uttering a word, or directing his mind to a single thought but one. There was no resource for

safety now but that of instant flight. Their booty, even more ample than they had anticipated, supplied them with abundant means ; and before any effectual step could be taken for their apprehension they were all beyond the reach of the laws which they had violated.

It was not, however, to the promptitude of their flight that they were altogether indebted for their safety. Old Yamon, returning to the hovel in which he lived, began to regret his ungrateful passion, to remember the benefits of his gentle patroness, and to reproach himself for having yielded to his coarse infirmity. After spending a sleepless night upon his couch of straw, disturbed by hideous dreams and causeless fears, he arose at daybreak, and taking his staff, departed for the Grove, impatient for a reconciliation. How great was his surprise to find the kitchen window broke and the door wide open at that early hour ! We will not follow him through the fearful detail of his discoveries. Let it be enough to say, that pale, trembling, and affrighted, he was found in the act of rushing from the house by the maid returning from the wake, with some of her companions, who remembered with her the quarrel of the preceding evening, and the menaces



with which it had terminated. The beggar was apprehended, examined, and committed to the county gaol. The circumstances were considered to constitute irresistible evidence, and the unhappy old man was formally executed near the scene on which the crime had been committed.

The tidings of this horrible injustice reached Hogan in America. His portion of the abominable spoils had enabled him to settle himself in a respectable little shop or *store*, as it is there denominated, where he managed a thriving trade for several years, the principal portion of his profit being amongst the emigrants and descendants of emigrants from his native isle, who had become settled in his neighbourhood. One of his customers, not long arrived, in speaking to another of some event which had taken place in our neighbourhood, by way of fixing the period of its occurrence, said "it had taken place exactly in that year in which old Yamon, the *bucaugh*, was hanged for the murder of Mrs. Maunsell of the Grove."

It was well for Hogan that the small green blind which curtained the railing of his little office prevented either of the speakers from observing his confusion. These tidings, while they established his security, added ten-fold to the pangs

of his remorse. A second murder only now revealed ! His former agonies, not yet extinct, though somewhat stilled by time and constant habit, returned upon him now with more than all their early violence. The sense of unrequited justice weighed upon his mind, and filled it with a dull and barren gloom. Some months rolled by, and he sought, in a fervent appeal to religion, a refuge from the dreadful state of mind in which he lived. But repentance without restitution is an idle word ; his efforts, though they revealed to him more fully the extent of his transgressions, could not quell the torments of an outraged conscience. Whether he walked, slept, ate, or drank, the dreadful figures of the innocent victims seemed to glide before his eyes, and a forewarning of judgment dwelt upon his heart. However he strove to employ his mind about the affairs of ordinary life, and to take an active interest in those subjects which amused his acquaintances, his thoughts would invariably revert to the Fir Grove, and to the awful tragedy which it commemorated.

Drawn by an impulse unaccountable as it was powerful, to the very spot with which all his misery was associated, the wretched Hogan dis-

posed of his little trans-Atlantic possession, and returned to his home towards the close of the preceding autumn, after an exile of more than twenty years. It was a bright harvest moon when he reached the village ; and without pausing to make himself known to a single acquaintance, he immediately proceeded in the direction of the Grove, feeling a relief in the thought that now at least he had it in his power to make some compensation to the violated justice of his country. The house was still uninhabited ; but the surrounding lands were richly cultivated, and the garden tended with as nice a care as in the lifetime of its kind proprietress. After surveying, with a singular intensity of interest, the scene which he had so much reason to remember, he went to his own cottage, which was now in the possession of a relative. Being readily recognised and welcomed by his kinsman, he obtained from him a most minute detail of all the circumstances attending the trial and execution of the innocent mendicant. On the following morning he arose early, and went to view the spot on which the poor old man had expiated so severely his hasty fit of anger. More than a month was spent in thus dallying with his internal torturer, and in-

quiring with the intensest interest into every trivial fact connected with the miserable event, to him the most engrossing in all history. Frequently, in moments of acute remorse, when alone at midnight, he determined that another sun should not go down on his secret ; but with the morning came fears of earthly punishment, and of earthly disgrace, which gained for the time an ascendancy above his deeper though more distant terrors. Alas ! how few of us are not children in this respect ! how few possess the power of mind necessary to enable them to fully estimate the difference between days that are numbered and days innumerable ! Thus loitering and undecided, he lived from day to day, torn by remorse, yet fearful of ignominy, now taking his hat with the view of delivering himself up to a neighbouring magistrate, and now returning from the very door of the functionary, repelled by a sudden failure of the nerves at the immediate view of death.

One morning, after spending a night of horrible anxiety, the conscience-stricken man arose at day-break, and prayed with floods of tears that heaven might illumine his mind in its perplexity, and give him firmness to act the part which he felt was required of him by justice. Somewhat

relieved by thus unburthening his soul, he walked out into a neighbouring burial-ground, where, as if to familiarise his mind to the thoughts of death, he was accustomed to spend a considerable portion of his time. The morning was still and fine; some cattle browsed amongst the graves, and the woodquests cooed in the boughs of the thick elms that screened the solemn scene of death. The wretched Hogan, filled with thoughts of gloom and of uncertainty, perused the inscriptions on the humble tombstones, and envied the repose of every mouldering corse beneath the sod. On a sudden, a man sprung over the church-yard wall, and ran with the speed of terror by the spot on which he stood. Immediately after voices were heard, exclaiming, "Stop him! stop him!" and two or three countrymen vaulted into the burying-ground. Conscious of hidden guilt, the unhappy Hogan started, and fled involuntarily with his utmost force. He was pursued and seized.

"I have him!" cried the peasant who first laid hand upon his collar. "Ah! scoundrel, you'll see Van Dieman's Land for this! We'll tache you to break paddocks in the night an' to be sheep stalin'."

"Well done, Tom!" cried a red faced farmer,

whose comfortable proportions did not allow him to keep pace with his servants in the chase, "You rascal, where's my sheep? Eh, Tom—what—where's the thief?—this is not he."

"I am the man," said Hogan, pale as death, but with a voice that sounded hollow in its firmness.

"You!" cried the farmer, "you are not the sheep stealer."

"I am not the man that stole your sheep," replied Hogan, "but I am one of the men who murdered Mrs. Maunsell of the Grove, for which Yamon, the old beggarman, was hanged unjustly."


This stunning intelligence was received by the group with wonder and dismay. The disclosure of his secret, however, appeared to have removed much of the load which lay upon the mind of Hogan, and in the following autumn he suffered, with less anxiety than he had felt in its remote contemplation, the punishment which the law awarded to his offence.



# SEND THE FOOL FARTHER: A TALE.

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“What'll you lay it's a lie?”

COMPLETE SONGSTER.

EAR the foot of a hill, which screened his cottage from the sharp Atlantic winds, dwelt Captain Bounce, one of the greatest men in Ireland, and a character so purely national that it is hard to conceive how he came to lack the Hibernian M' or O'. Some genealogists, indeed, assert that the family have a claim to the patronymic expletive, and ought to be called O'Bounce, an assertion which they ground upon the following incident:—

Some years ago, a distant member of the family

being in pecuniary affliction, was necessitated to accept the office of deputy sheriff, *vulgatim*, hangman, in his native county. It happened in one instance, that in the act of fastening the indissoluble tie, the cap fell off by which the finishers of the law were obliged in uncivilised places to keep their identity concealed, and the victim recognized an old friend and boon companion in his executioner. "O Bounce!" exclaimed the culprit, in a tone of mingled wonder and upbraiding. The family, however, were unwilling to assume the title on this solitary authority, and continued to write simple Bounce.

The Captain came into the world on the 1st of April, as if he were born to make a fool of it. Being an eldest son he was called William, after his grandfather, and went in his childhood by the name of Billy Bounce. Even at this early period he gave indications of that genius by which, at a maturer age, it was his wont at once to dazzle and to mock his species. An incident or two may furnish an example.

One lonesome winter night, at a time when the neighbourhood was infested by the Whiteboys, when sober people were obliged to follow Cowper's advice, and



———ere they slept  
See that their polish'd arms were primed with care.  
And drop the night-bolt.——

On such an evening, when the Bounces were collected round the parlour fire, discoursing fearful things upon the state of the country, and absorbed in social communion, a chorus of female shrieks, issuing from the kitchen, broke up the tranquil circle, and placed them horror-struck upon their feet. Door after door burst open—shriek after shriek re-echoed through the house—the rushing of many feet was heard in the hall—the parlour door flew back, and a bevy of frightened females, servants of the house, fell prostrate on the ground, one fainting, another screaming, and a third convulsed. “The Whiteboys!” was the thought uppermost in the mind of every spectator, but one of the women, who had some glimmering of reason left and power of utterance, announced the appalling fact, that the cause of terror was something more than human. They had all, she said, been seated round the kitchen fire “crusheening,” when the back door opened, and a figure dressed in white, and of prodigious height, appeared upon the threshold, with eyes like fire, teeth like polished spindles, &c. &c. Mr. Bounce took

down a blunderbuss, and a visitor, who had come that night, laid hold of the poker. The family followed at their heels, afraid to remain behind, yet quaking to proceed. Cocking his piece, and raising it to his shoulder, the leader boldly advanced into the kitchen, but was surprised to find all still. A damask table-cloth lay upon the settle-bed, and near it stood the sweeping-brush, with guilt in its very attitude : far removed from these, on a stool by the fire-side, and seeming as meek as sleeping Innocence herself, sat Billy Bounce, looking up, and wondering what his father was going to do with the blunderbuss.

Some men there are love not a gaping pig,  
Some that are mad if they behold a cat:—

the Jew who spoke the lines might have added a third (and rhymed to boot) if he had known Batt Houlahan, the herdsman of Mr. Bounce, for Batt had a natural antipathy to a rat. Sailors, it is said, who have been rocked to sleep by the tempests of Cape Horn, and heeded the stormiest winds of the miscalled Pacific no more than Brutus did the threats of Cassius, will look pale and serious on the outside of a stage that conveys them to Whitechapel from Gravesend. Soldiers who have stood unmoved in the face of breach

and battery, will fear the swelling of a summer billow ; and the monster Danger, with which we have grown bold and familiar under one aspect, will resume all its terrors when it takes a new and unaccustomed form. Batt Houlahan, who feared neither ball, powder, cudgel, sword, man, nor ghost, was accessible to terror in one solitary point—he feared a rat. He had rather, as he often acknowledged, “face a whole fair” in arms than a single one of these dingy, sharp-eyed haunters of the barn and hay-yard. If he had been on the committee when David Wilkie was elected an R.A., he would have rejected him for choosing such a subject as that of the admirable piece which gained him the distinction. A rat-catcher in Batt Houlahan’s eyes was a greater hero than Buonaparte, and the crossing of Lodi was a trifle in comparison with the storming of a rat-hole.

One Easter Saturday Batt had purchased a gay-coloured neckcloth, with the view of doing honour to the coming festival, and making a respectable figure in the streets or rather street of ———. Batt laid his treasure, just as it had been handed to him by Peter Guerin, the only dealer in “soft goods” in all the town, folded

and tied in a sheet of neat brown paper, upon the kitchen table, and went to seek "sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care," in the settle-bed, his wonted place of rest. The morning came—Batt rose, shaved, dressed, and prepared for the important task of "tying the cravat." The parcel seems heavy—the cord is cut—the shining pattern disclosed; did Peter Guerin give a double square, that the parcel looks so large? It is unfolded—oh! horror upon horror! the carcase of a rat lay wrapt within! and chorussing the roars of the electrified herdsman, and heightening the horrors of the scene, the urchin laughter of the mischief-maker was heard outside the kitchen window, where, grinning through a patched and dingy pane, appeared the conscious face of Billy Bounce.

Who frightened the maids into hysterics?—Billy Bounce. Who, with hideous faces, made the baby squall?—It was Billy Bounce. Who put nettles in the dancing-master's stockings?—It was Billy Bounce. Who took away the stool, and let old Cauth come tumbling to the ground?—It was Billy Bounce. The feats of the Spanish *Dama Duenda* were tame and few compared to those of Billy Bounce. At a suitable age he was put to a boarding-school in the neighbouring city, where

his progress did not belie the early indications of his boyish genius. Here he learned to stick pins, points upwards, in his class-fellows' seats ; to insinuate long queues of twisted paper under the collar of the usher's coat, while the good man walked gravely up and down marvelling much at the truly unextinguishable laughter of the school ; with more accomplishments of the kind than we have leisure to enumerate. In spare hours he picked up scraps of Greek and Latin, arithmetic, and other trifles, of which he never made any use and retained but an indifferent recollection. Soon after he left this enlightened seminary, he received a pair of colours in the \* \* \* \* yeomanry, thus enabling himself to sink the use of the too-familiar "Billy," and permitting us to grace his history with the warlike substitute. Of his glories in the service who shall tell ?—How often mock reports of Whiteboy conflagrations would send a troop from bog to bog, and mountain to mountain, during the lapse of a long winter's night, while Captain Bounce, the sole author of the visionary arson, slept soundly in his bed, or woke to laugh at his successful hoax. The last pun of a certain facetious judge circulated not more widely nor excited more amusement than

the latest hoax of Captain Bounce. If a bachelor found himself married in everybody's house except his own he might safely trace the banns to Captain Bounce. If the minister had his slumbers broken by threatening letters from Colonel Skinemalive or Sergeant Moonshine upon the score of tithes, he might be sure that Captain Bounce was at the bottom of it. Sometimes the Crolys of Mount Croly received and accepted an invitation to a "family dinner" with the O'Learys of Bally O'Leary, and only discovered in six months after that they had taken the poor O'Learys entirely by surprise, and that the invitation emanated solely from the hospitable heart of Captain Bounce. Sometimes the Æsculapius of the villages received a note requiring him in "haste, post haste, despatch," to do the office of Lucina for the better half of a neighbouring country gentleman; nor was it until he had roused the grumbling porter in his lodge that he learned how little necessity there was for his assistance, and how pleasant a thing it was to have Captain Bounce for a neighbour.

In the course of some years, however, an accident occurred which afforded a striking instance of the brittleness of fame, and showed

how suddenly a single lapse of vigilance may cast the brightest reputation into shade.

Some midnight plunderers had invaded the paddock of the Captain, and stolen a favourite mare, which had borne him on her back he knew not how oft. No pains were spared in endeavouring to apprehend the thief, but all were unavailing. The Captain now found himself in the predicament of the mischievous urchin, in the instructive history of the Boy and the Wolf. To which of his neighbours should he apply to assist him in the recovery of his stolen property? Who would believe him that he had lost the mare at all? At length, one morning, while he was at breakfast, a neighbour entered with an air of secrecy to say that he thought he could put him in the way of recovering his horse. The Captain was overjoyed, and doubly grateful as this very neighbour had long been one of his most notorious butts. He could not, however, afford any direct information as to the robbery, but if the Captain had leisure for a short ride, he would give him a note for a friend of his, a Mr. O'Connor, who lived on the side of the road about a mile distant from the village, and from whom he might learn something more to the purpose.

The note was written and sealed, and Captain Bounce on a soft spring morning took his way to the residence of Mr. O'Connor. That gentleman at first was rather surprised at being referred to, but on reading the note, he seemed all on a sudden to have recovered his recollection. He had not, indeed, himself seen the animal going past, but he would give him a note for Mr. Ajax M'Orient, of Mount Orient, who lived farther up the mountain road, and who would be likely to know something more about it. The Captain was obliged, but felt rather awkward at the idea of taking a note to Mr. M'Orient.

"To tell you the truth," said he, half laughing, "I was foolish enough, some time since, knowing him to be a kind of virtuoso, to play him an ugly trick, and I'm afraid he does not forget it. I had an old battered head of a lion, or some such animal, done in limestone, which I persuaded him to forward to the Geological Society as a fossil organic remain, with a very elaborate paper written by himself. The rogues were sharper than he ; and it occasioned such a laugh against him, that I fear to this moment he is not at all obliged to me."

Mr. O'Connor laughed at the Captain's hoax,



but persuaded him to take the letter, saying that Mr. M'Orient was a great deal too good-natured to think of such a trifle. Accordingly the Captain was persuaded, and had the satisfaction to find that although Mr. M'Orient was somewhat cool in his manner at first, yet, on reading Mr. O'Connor's note, he became quite cordial, and gave him a letter to Lieutenant Beauchamp, who unfortunately was likewise unable to furnish him with direct information, but offered a note to Major O'Brien of Drumshambo Hall, who, as a magistrate, had more opportunities of coming at the truth. But this was out of the question—Captain Bounce had gone so far as on one occasion to make an *April fool* of the old Major.

"An April fool!" exclaimed the Lieutenant, bursting into a roar of laughter—"Oh, never mind that; the Major would do more than this for me. And so you made an April fool of the Major?"

Captain Bounce shook his head with a self-criminating look, although he could scarce suppress a chuckling laugh at recollection of the hoax. Like most of his former butts, he found the Major also somewhat reserved, until he had read the note, and then he too appeared

to enter cordially into the Captain's wishes. How he regretted that the Captain had not called two hours sooner! or that he did not hear of his having lost a horse. Lieutenant Beauchamp was deceived in supposing he had seen her, but if Captain Bounce were not tired, he would give him two lines to a friend of his, also a magistrate, and one of the sharpest fellows in the country, who, if the mare were in Ireland, would be certain to have her, and the thief to boot, at the Captain's hall-door within a week. Again, with abundant gratitude, the Captain set out upon his quest. He did not find this Corypheus of the magistracy at home; and, after tracking him from place to place for a few hours, could only obtain from him a note to the chief constable of a police station, at about a mile distant; who again directed him to a neighbouring attorney; who again recommended him to another friend; by whom he was referred to another, and another, and another, until the day had almost closed upon his fruitless and perplexing journey after an animal that

—— like the bird in the story,  
That fluttered from tree to tree  
With the talisman's glittering glory.

seemed to glide farther from his grasp the more strenuously he continued the pursuit.

The last note he had received was directed to the rector of the parish adjoining his own. He had now been in motion since morning, and the beams of the setting sun beheld him in the same state of suspense respecting his pilfered property as at his first departure from home. At the minister's, however, the affair was set at rest. The reverend gentleman was too wise to be caught by so notorious a *quizz* as Captain Bounce.

"Ah! Captain," said he, "this is too much—a mare stolen—a letter—no—no—I'll read none of your notes. I have not waited to this hour of the day to learn that it is the first of April."

"The first of April!"

Poor Bounce was thunderstruck. He strove by a forcible effort of self-command to conceal his emotions until he had left the house, having terminated as well as he could his interview with the vigilant rector. Turning aside out of the high road into an adjacent grove, in order to escape all observation, he ventured to draw from his pocket the note which the cautious minister had refused to read, and broke the seal with a

too prophetic misgiving of what lay beneath. There was no doubt upon the subject. It was, indeed, his own birth day, the first of April—the annual festival in which his genius had revelled since his childhood, though now the loss of his favourite riding nag had made it steal upon him unobserved ! Before him lay unfolded the contents of the note, a copy of the circular which he had been hawking about unconsciously since morning,—“SEND THE FOOL FARTHER !” Never before had he been so taken in. It was too much. The laugh of the whole county turned against him who had laughed at the whole county since his sides were capable of such gay convulsion. He never recovered it ; resigned his commission ; never after ventured on a hoax ; seldom went into company, nor showed himself abroad more frequently than was necessary for his business, although he might sometimes be seen in the dusk of the evening, walking along the hawthorn hedge which skirted his meadow, with a suspicious attitude, a melancholy step, and eyes quite different from those merry organs of intelligence whose twinklings were the well-known harbingers of many a jest. Nay, so deeply did this unhappy downfall prey upon his spirits,

that his man assures me, in passing through his room at night he sometimes hears him mutter in his dreams, in a half-delirious tone, the words of the too successful circular—"SEND THE—FOOL—FARTHER!"

THE END.



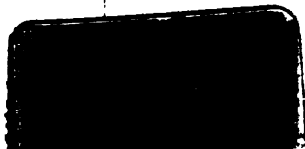


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